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FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

Amend says goodbye

Posted: Wednesday, Jun 04, 2008 - 11:13:16 pm PDT

By MAUREEN DOLAN

Staff writer

SHAWN GUST/Press

Deanna Thornhill, left, gets a hug from retiring Coeur d'Alene School District Superintendent Harry Amend as they laugh with Sharol Hansen Wednesday during Amend's retirement reception in Coeur d'Alene.

Superintendent departs after leading Coeur d'Alene School District for six years

COEUR d'ALENE -- Punch and cake were served and good wishes flowed at the Midtown Meeting Center Wednesday at a send-off open house hosted by the Coeur d'Alene School District for retiring school chief Harry Amend.

With his wife by his side, Amend visited with district employees, patrons, city officials and business leaders who stopped by the meeting center to say goodbye to him.

"Sandy and I were deeply touched by the response of this community," Amend said. "It's a community that really, really clearly values and loves their children and for a school superintendent, you couldn't ask for a better place to be."

Amend's departure from the district, after six years as superintendent, marks the end of a career spanning nearly four decades in education.

Amend announced in September that the 2007-08 school year would be his last as superintendent and that assistant superintendent Hazel Bauman would take his place July 1.

"I believe the district is going to be in great hands with Hazel and the experienced board we have," Amend said.

Bauman credited Amend with bringing the International Baccalaureate program to Coeur d'Alene.

"He is an amazing person when it comes to developing and maintaining relationships," Bauman said. "He's mentored me in doing that not only with staff, but with students and the community also."

Another program Amend brought to the district is The Bridge Academy's high school credit retrieval program.

Bridge principal Susan Thomas said the program is modeled after a similar program in Kalispell, Mont., where Amend was superintendent before coming to Coeur d'Alene.

"He really cares about the kids that are at risk," Thomas said. "He's my mentor and my friend. I have the greatest respect for how he has run this district and helped the kids."

As this year's president of the Coeur d'Alene Education, retiring Skyway Elementary third-grade teacher Paula Marano had an opportunity to meet with Amend on a weekly basis.

"He's a very serious and sincere person and he has a heart," Marano said.

Marano said she has seen the district go through many changes since she began teaching here in 1994 and as a volunteer since the 1970s when her own children attended district schools.

She said during Amend's tenure, mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act have created unique challenges in education and the way it is funded.

District director of elementary education Pam Pratt moved into her position after 15 years as a principal while Amend was superintendent.

Pratt said the skills Amend acquired through years of experience as a school counselor in the late 1970s and early '80s never left him.

"He's such a compassionate, caring person," Pratt said. "I think he knows the name of every staff member in the district -- and their kids' names."

Amend would not disclose his plans for the future, but said he and Sandy are happy to be remaining in Coeur d'Alene.

Cd'A School District cutting back

Posted: Wednesday, Jun 04, 2008 - 11:13:16 pm PDT

By MAUREEN DOLAN

Staff writer

Assistant superintendent position will not be filled, summer school is canceled

COEUR d'ALENE -- Summer school won't be in session in Coeur d'Alene this year.

The district announced its decision Wednesday to cut the summer instruction program -- free for students in grades one through eight who need help correcting academic deficiencies.

The program elimination is a hint of what will be revealed when the district publicly reviews its proposed budget for 2008-09 at a special board meeting Monday.

"We have some really significant budget challenges. Among many other reductions, summer school was one we just made," said incoming superintendent Hazel Bauman. "We feel really badly about that because we know there are kids that can benefit from it."

Bauman would not discuss additional cuts, decreases in revenue or increased expenditures before trustees have a chance to see a draft of the budget at Monday's meeting although she said some expenditures that exceeded the district's projections are due to rising gas prices and the cost of snow removal.

She said the district has not had any layoffs "in this round of budget cuts," but will be reducing positions through normal attrition and retirements.

When she takes over as superintendent July 1, Bauman will not be hiring an assistant superintendent to fill the position she will be leaving vacant.

Bauman's salary as assistant superintendent for the 2007-2008 school year was \$111,804.

"That is one of the things we are cutting," Bauman said. "I just can't in good conscience do that when we're having to make these other reductions."

The budget cuts have nothing to do with the failure of a \$31 million school plant facilities levy at the polls May 20, Bauman said.

She said the district's budget cuts have to do with maintenance and operation fund challenges.

"That is a completely separate issue. The facilities money does not cross over," Bauman said. "They are due to budget shortfalls. Our revenues are less than we anticipated and our expenditures higher than we thought they would be."

In recent years, the cost of the summer school program, including hiring teachers to remediate students in the core areas of reading and math, was paid by the district with no state funding.

In the past, families paid a fee for their students to attend.

"A few years ago, the district removed that fee because many students who needed the program were also from families that were economically challenged," Bauman said.

The amount cut from the budget with the elimination of this summer's program is \$115,000.

Each year the district identifies students in need of remediation -- those who have not performed well on the Idaho Standards Achievement Test or have failing grades -- and recommends to their parents that they attend summer school, Bauman said.

She said personal letters have gone out to the families of each of the 210 students identified this year notifying them that the program will not be taking place.

"We try not to cut the things that directly affect the kids, the summer school program breaks my heart, " Bauman said.

Other summer programs that receive state funding, including the programs at The Bridge Academy and Project CDA, will continue, Bauman said.

The fee-based School Plus program and grant-based CDA4Kids will also continue.

FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

NC marks centennial

A group of cheerleaders from North Central High School huddle under umbrellas in the fall of 1943. Photo courtesy of North Central High School (Photo courtesy of North Central High School)

Lisa Leinberger
Staff writer
June 5, 2008

"Nearly 300 students, all in the first high school year, left their names yesterday morning on the rolls of the North Central high school, the doors of which were thrown open yesterday for the first time."

The Spokesman-Review, Sept. 9, 1908

In the century since those words were published in The Spokesman-Review, thousands more students have passed through the school's halls, whether the fabled old building that was torn down in 1981 or the new that replaced it. North Central opened with only 12 classrooms and a promise for more.

"The plans for the entire high school," said the 1908 newspaper article, "to be built a wing at a time, call for 80 rooms and will constitute the finest high school west of Chicago."

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The article went on to say that the school had the luxury of restrooms reserved only for teachers, "handsomely furnished and comfortably finished, with private closets and washrooms."

Alan Hanson, a retired NC teacher, former student and now the school's unofficial historian, said when he started as a student in the old building he noticed the wooden stairs had been worn down from generations of students going either up or down, depending on which wing of the

building they were in, since the staircases weren't big enough to fit students going in both directions.

He said he just knew that he was in a very old, traditional place.

The school is proud of its traditions, and makes the claim that it is the oldest continual high school in Spokane.

Although Lewis and Clark might also have a claim to this title, folks at North Central disagree.

South Central High School, as Lewis and Clark used to be called, was built on the site of the old Spokane High School. In 1910, South Central burned to the ground, and the students were shipped to North Central.

The students were still considered South Central students; they graduated from South Central High School during the two years the school was being rebuilt. The South Central colors were still orange and black, and the North Central colors were still red and black. But during those two years, every high school student in public schools in Spokane attended North Central and during sports events the unified school used blue and white for its colors.

The two schools remained rivals over the years until other schools sprouted up in the district.

Hanson said there were several teachers who were at the school so long during those early years that they became part of the tradition of North Central.

Elsa Pinkham simultaneously strikes fear and evokes reverence from those students who remember her.

She taught at the school from 1918 to 1959. She started such traditions as the biennial production of the "Doll Shop" and Red Feathers – two traditions that have made comebacks in recent years.

Hanson said that stories still circulate about when Pinkham taught swimming. She often used a long pole to push students who didn't know how to swim into the pool for the first time.

Lowell Bradford was the band director at the school for 44 years. He had polio and walked on crutches in a school that had four floors and no elevator.

"If he had to go upstairs, kids would carry him up," Hanson said.

He also refused to let girls join band, and the year after he retired, 1960, the band went co-ed.

When the old school was torn down in 1981, much of its memorabilia disappeared. Hanson said he tried to haul as many things as he could into the new school, but many of the school's trophies or other memories were lost.

But the school went on to start new traditions, such as the annual Groovy Shoes basketball game against Shadle Park and the Distinguished Alumni plaque in the main hallway.

Over the years, many North Central students went on to some sort of notoriety.

Former Congressman George Nethercutt went to the school, as did Jack Geraghty, a former Spokane mayor, baseball Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg and a guy named Jerry Sage.

Anyone who has seen the movie "The Great Escape," has seen the character played by Steve McQueen. That character was based on Sage.

This year's inductees are Steve Longoria, vice president of semiconductor solutions at IBM Systems and Technology Group; Charles DeRoshia, a research psychologist for AMES (NASA) Research Center; Ruth Richardson Nichols, the first African-American student body president of the school in 1938, who went on to become a doctor of podiatry; George McKay, a renowned composer; Richard Edwards, a collegiate basketball star and local business owner; and Wyoma "June" Everett, noted for her volunteerism with Vietnam Veterans and Gold Star Mothers.

When school officials realized the centennial of the school was quickly approaching, they gathered alumni to try to plan a party.

They formed a Centennial Association, led by 1994 graduate Katie DeBill. She said organizing a large group to plan hasn't been an easy task.

The association sent out information cards, but 400 were returned to sender. There have been several meetings when people drop in to hear about what is going on, but not many of them join committees. There is, however, a core group that has plans in the works.

They quickly came up with a theme – "Northsiders True – Continuing the Legacy" – and a logo to go along with it. Then came plans for the party.

Kim Rieken, a social studies and government teacher who has been at the school since the new one opened in 1981, said a big alumni reunion was held at the Fairgrounds the year the old school was torn down.

"It was huge and very well-attended," she said.

Many alumni felt they would like to do something similar to celebrate the centennial, but the cost of renting a big place such as the Fairgrounds or the Arena would be prohibitive and serving alcohol would be out of the question, since many recent graduates and current students are still underage.

It was decided on an open house Sept. 13 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Many notable speakers will be there at 10 a.m. to talk about North Central, including Nethercutt, Hanson and Superintendent Nancy Stowell.

There will also be a letter from the White House read at the event.

"It's kind of just for people to see the new building," DeBill said of the open house. She said there are many people who would like to get together with their old classmates, and the hope is those groups will attend the open house and then gather later on that day for their own separate reunions.

In fact, the Class of 1958 will be holding its 50th reunion that same weekend.

The Class of 1957 gathered some funds so this year's seniors will have a special pin with the centennial logo on it to wear on their gowns when they graduate Saturday.

During the traditional production of the "Doll Shop" last month, there was a special alumni performance held during an afternoon.

During the performance drama teacher Tom Armitage asked members of the audience to stand if they graduated from the school in the 1930s, '40s, '50s and upward.

Once everyone was standing, the audience sang "Red and Black," the school fight song.

"It was like you gave them a million dollars," Rieken said of the people standing in the crowd.

The school also will have a Centennial football game the night of Sept. 12, and organizers hope to have a bonfire and tailgating parties, and there will be a special presentation during halftime.

After the celebration is complete, DeBill, Hanson and Rieken all hope to keep the Centennial Association going by forming an official alumni association to keep track of the school's graduates and start doing fundraisers for the school.

For many, North Central holds a special place in their hearts.

Rieken said that on many occasions, people say to her, "If it wasn't for that school I wouldn't be where I am today."

NC Centennial

Here is the calendar of events for the North Central Centennial Celebration:

- Saturday: The graduation ceremony of the Class of 2008
- Sept. 12: North Central Centennial football game, 5:30 p.m.
- Sept. 13: Centennial Open House, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Sept. 13: Alumni-Booster Golf Tournament: 1:30 p.m. at Downriver Golf Course

If you are interested in joining the Centennial Association, call Katie DeBill at 251-3013.

Thanks to football coach, Shadle grad finds new life

Cindy Hval
Correspondent
June 5, 2008

Everyone has a defining moment – a point in time when life as they know it changes and will never be the same. For Travis Putnam that moment came when he was 14. "I was at Boy Scout camp," he recalled. "Part way through the week I noticed people were treating me differently." When camp was over, instead of taking him home, his Scoutmaster took him to his grandparents' house. Putnam didn't understand why, but he soon found out.

"My grandparents told me my dad had died," he said. His father had fallen asleep at the wheel and been killed in a car accident. In that moment Putnam lost everything most dear and familiar to him and embarked on a frightening journey into the unknown.

"My dad and I were really close," he said. "My mom wasn't in the picture. He had to work full time to support me and my sister, but he still took time to take me to Laser Quest and help me earn Boy Scout badges."

Advertisement

Putnam struggled with his loss. He didn't get along with his grandparents. "I ran away a lot," he said. He lived for a few months with his bachelor cousin but said he knew he needed more structure. He needed a family.

And finally, at his point of greatest need, he found someone, or perhaps someone found him.

Putnam had always been passionate about football. His eighth-grade coach especially, had made an impression on him. "He was one of my favorite mentors. He was strict but made it (football) fun."

That coach, Cory Pritchard, heard that his former player was floundering. He and his wife, Julie, invited Putnam to dinner. When Putnam recalls that night his voice thickens. "They offered me a place to live," he said quietly. "It was an emotional night."

With his living situation taken care of, Putnam began high school. The burly football player worked hard both on the field and in class. He trains hard to keep his body strong, but it's his inner strength most impresses those who know him.

Guidance counselor Megan Decker described Putnam as a "big, strong weightlifter who is also kind and sensitive." Decker said Putnam has earned the respect of his peers as well as the school staff. "He works hard to maintain integrity in his academic and personal life and exemplifies all the best qualities we hope for in our future leaders."

Putnam plans to attend Brigham Young University-Idaho this fall and hopes to become a physical therapist. He said Shadle has been a great place for him.

Still, his loss is always with him. "There's times I miss my dad a lot," he said. But he's thankful for the Pritchard family. "Corey treats me like a son."

As he thought about the twists and turns his life has taken since that singular moment four years ago, Putnam said, "I think my dad would say, 'You're doing a good job – keep it up.'"

FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Committee continues search for interim UI president

Staff report

Posted on: Wednesday, June 04, 2008

A committee looking for an interim University of Idaho president is "actively engaged" in the search but hasn't identified any finalists, Idaho State Board of Education spokesman Mark Browning said today.

Browning said the committee is "getting a considerable amount of input" from people who are interested in the job or who recommend other people. The committee, which is led by board members Paul Agidius, of Moscow, and Sue Thilo, also has been talking to people associated with the UI about what they want in an interim president.

The committee still expects to name an interim president by June 30, Browning said.

OUR VIEW: Ed board wrong to request a do-over (Editorial)

By Doug Bauer, for the editorial board

Posted on: Wednesday, June 04, 2008

Students who flunk a class pay a heavy price. They either take the class again and receive a passing grade, or fail to graduate.

Similar standards should apply to the Idaho State Board of Education, which failed Idaho students from 2002 to 2006 by not adequately testing them under provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Instead, the board recently asked the U.S. Department of Education for a do-over, claiming poor statewide education standards exams failed to accurately measure student performance.

Board Executive Director Mike Rush requested that test results from 2002 to 2006 be wiped off the board, and that the feds start measuring Idaho students' progress from 2007 forward.

More than students and their parents should be rankled by the state's request, which essentially is an admission of wasting taxpayer money on an Idaho Standards Achievement Test that didn't meet NCLB criteria.

The NCLB has drawn widespread criticism, most notably of the unfunded mandate variety. But contrary to popular belief, rules were not made to be broken.

That appears to be what the state board is insinuating by requesting a clean start.

The board was fined \$103,000 for the slip-up in 2005 and has since changed test vendors, but that's no reason to request a do-over.

We understand that clearing the record and starting anew would be the best case scenario for many of Idaho's schools, but the state's students should graduate with the same breadth of knowledge as their peers across the country, if not the world.

That's why NCLB was put into effect, and that's why the state should be held just as accountable as any other when it comes to meeting the law's requirements.

The dog didn't eat Idaho's homework from 2002 to 2006. The state purchased a test that didn't pass muster, and should be prepared to face the consequences of its actions.

Anything less sends the wrong message to Idaho's students and the taxpayers who foot the bill for their education.

FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

No new education news stories posted online.

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

Meridian scholarship flap raises questions

As the city grows, officials say formal policies are needed to prevent even the appearance of impropriety.

BY CYNTHIA SEWELL - cmsewell@idahostatesman.com

Edition Date: 06/05/08

A decision to award a city scholarship to the mayor's daughter could force Meridian officials to set a policy for how the city's 2-year-old program should be run.

Mayor Tammy de Weerd's daughter RoAnne de Weerd was one of four high school seniors chosen from 14 applicants to receive \$1,000 for next year's college bills. RoAnne de Weerd was rewarded for community service - and no one disputes that she is a dedicated volunteer.

"I know the perception looks bad," said Meridian City Councilman Keith Bird, who was one of four people who judged the winners. "But I can honestly tell you nothing happened under the table. RoAnne deserves this award."

But Bird said the city has never set guidelines for how to spend the scholarship money, which comes from leftover cash donated to the city for the annual State of the City address. The resulting controversy may push city leaders to rethink how the city does business as it grows from a small town to one of the state's largest cities.

"Meridian is no longer a small town and a lot of their processes have to become more formal and more sophisticated than what they do in a small town," said Boise State public policy and administration professor Elizabeth Fredericksen. "There are some lessons to take from this. This is a symptom of growing pains, it is not malicious."

She said the conflicts should have been avoided by the mayor and other city officials.

"It wasn't thought out," she said. "You had well-intentioned people who were too close to see through it."

Mayor de Weerd was not one of the scholarship judges, but the applications came to her office, and the money came from a city account that her office controls. Last week, De Weerd announced the winners at a City Council meeting, with her daughter at her side.

"I was removed from the process," de Weerd told the Statesman. Her staff collected the applications and selected the judges, city officials said.

A city staff member chose Bird and three members of the Meridian Promise Board to look over the applications and pick winners in one night.

De Weerd said her executive assistant, Robert Simison, checked with City Attorney Bill Nary about possible conflicts of interest and Nary found none.

RoAnne de Weerd is a co-chairwoman of the Promise Board. Plus, one of the three board members who volunteered was state Rep. Mark Snodgrass, who had employed the 18-year-old in his recent campaign for the Idaho Senate and was listed as one of her references on the application.

Before the judges got the applications, the names were removed, city officials said. But Bird said he knew right away which was RoAnne de Weerd's application.

The Meridian High School graduating senior's commitment to volunteering and her civic involvement are clear on the application - she donated more than 500 hours in the last year; chairs or serves on more than a dozen civic, nonprofit, social and political organizations; and works as volunteer coordinator for both the Idaho Meth Project and the Ada County Republican Women.

But experts say it is also clear that a gift of \$1,000 from city coffers to the daughter of the city's mayor creates the perception, at least, of a conflict.

Fredericksen said she is "saddened" to see the city's ethics issues cloud over the teenager's achievements.

"You have a young woman who is accomplished and has very clearly worked hard," she said. "It is very unfortunate she is to be penalized because she has these relationships."

Bird and city officials point out that the scholarship money comes from donations, not tax dollars, but Fredericksen said that public money is public money, regardless of the source.

"Once those contributions are made, they are public funds, unless the mayor's office has a separate nonprofit organization through which they administer the funds," Fredericksen said.

In fact, using business donations instead of tax dollars can create an even bigger appearance of possible conflicts, said Jasper LiCalzi, chairman of The College of Idaho's department of political economy - where RoAnne de Weerd plans to attend next year.

Though LiCalzi said he does not believe this is the case in Meridian, some political leaders in other states have used donations to fund scholarships as an indirect way for businesses to kick back money to family and friends of public officials.

Elected officials and people appointed to boards and commissions are held to a higher standard and must "avoid any appearance of impropriety," LiCalzi said. De Weerd and Bird both agreed and said the city will have a better policy in place next year. And Bird said this could be a good time for the city to review its ethics policy.

"I think we need to look at it - I think maybe we have some loopholes," he said. "As we get larger, I think we should take more of a look."

LiCalzi said Meridian and other public agencies awarding scholarships should make the children of elected or appointed officials and employees ineligible for the scholarship and keep the selection process independent of both the city and the businesses donating money.

"In hindsight, I'm sure my staff would have done things different," de Weerd said. "From now on, we are going to spell everything out."

She does not want the city's scholarship program "to be tainted by a process that was used by an interested employee who didn't anticipate the kind of world that sometimes we live in."

"Has this been a great lesson to write everything down, to scope it out?" she said. "You bet."

Cynthia Sewell: 377-6428

Boise summer lunch program for kids kicks off today

Anna Webb - awebb@idahostatesman.com
Edition Date: 06/05/08

The Idaho Foodbank, Boise city councilmember Maryanne Jordan, Boise City Parks' new Mobile Recreation Unit and first-graders from Koelsch Elementary will kick off Picnic in the Park 2008, a summer lunch program for kids at 11:30 a.m. Thursday at Winstead Park, 6150 Northview St.

Winstead will be the only park serving lunch on Thursday, but the regular program will begin Friday and continue every weekday (except July 4) until Aug. 22.

Boise sites are: Ann Morrison, Cassia, Elm Grove, Fairmont, Ivywild, Manitou, Owyhee, Veterans Memorial and Winstead parks, plus the Boise Family YMCA (1050 W. State St.), Davis Apartments (970 N. 29th St.) and Northwest Pointe Apartments (3475 N. Five Mile Rd.). The lunches at the apartment complexes are open to all.

In Meridian, Picnic in the Park lunches will be served from June 6 to Aug. 22 at Storey Park.

In Nampa, lunch will be served starting June 9 at the Boys and Girls Club, 316 Stampede Drive.

Boise's Cole Elementary closes its doors for good today

Katherine Jones / Idaho Statesman

Thursday, June 5, is the last day of school at Cole School -- for students as well as the school itself. Cole, which was built in 1888, will be torn down.

Cole Elementary: A farewell to a century-old place of learning

Children's Home will benefit when Cole school closes

Ask Tim: Saying goodbye to Boise schools

Statesman staff - Idaho Statesman

Edition Date: 06/05/08

Thursday is truly the last day of school for students, faculty and staff of Boise's Cole Elementary, which is closing along with several other schools as the Boise School District consolidates and rebuilds many schools.

The brick building was put up in 1902. It replaced a wooden schoolhouse built in 1888 on farmland donated by the Cole family.

The original building was designed by the Boise architectural firm of Campbell and Wayland, and the 1934 gymnasium addition by the firm of Tourtellotte and Hummel.

In 2006, Boise voters approved a \$94 million bond to build new schools. The district chose Cole as one of four old elementary schools to close this year.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

New floor, less stress

CSI replaces gymnasium's original surface

By Andrea Jackson

Staff writer

College of Southern Idaho athletes are known for raising the roof in the school's gymnasium, but on Wednesday they watched from the sidelines as workers tore up the floor.

The 40-year-old maple floor, original to the gymnasium, is dated in terms of supportive engineering and may be connected to at least three recent stress fractures that have benched athletes.

A new floor, slightly lighter in color, is set to be installed by August before volleyball season begins. It's designed to provide more support at a cost of about \$203,000, funded from CSI coffers.

"We've had a tremendous number of stress fractures," said CSI President Jerry Beck as he stood near a flurry of sawdust and sparks.

Beck and other college officials said there isn't a direct link between the floor and fractures, but they say it's possible.

"There's no scientific evidence that says the stress fractures were caused by the floor, but you don't have to be a brain surgeon to see the possible association," said Jeff Renegar, CSI assistant men's basketball coach.

Some pieces of the old floor were removed delicately Wednesday because they could become memoriabilia, said Beck.

The new 10,000 square-foot floor will come from Robbins Sports Surfaces, a Cincinnati-based company which installed similar flooring through dealers at other collegiate courts including Harvard, Georgia Tech University, Indiana University, the University of Southern California and the University of Maryland.

CSI's new floor will be thicker than the original version - measuring about two inches - with four layers of maple, plywood, foam and concrete, said Starr Corporation President Michael Arrington, project supervisor.

The old floor consisted of about an inch of wood lined atop steel tracks, suspended by clips over concrete.

"I can see now why there's not much spring in the floor," said Beck.

That could have meant injuries.

"When you land on it, there's not a lot of give," said Renegar. "Coming off the rim, that's a pretty good distance, that's a pretty good drop."

Three athletes have suffered stress fractures in their feet during the past couple years, and some doctors have said the floor could have had something to do with that. "(Doctors) wouldn't rule it out," Renegar said. "Luckily President Beck and the college are putting in the floor."

Half of CSI's athletic teams play on it. "All of our athletes are an investment by the college," said Renegar. "If they're hurt, that's not a very good investment."

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

TwO IdahO SchOOl dIStrICTS gET EmErgEncy rESpOnSE granTS

FROM AP WIRE REPORTS

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded two Idaho school districts with grants to improve their readiness and emergency response plans.

The Kamiah Joint School District has been awarded nearly \$200,000 and the Madison School District has been awarded nearly \$100,000. They were two of the 92 districts across 34 states to be granted more than \$24 million under the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools program.

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced the grants Wednesday, saying the money will help ensure the safety of children by allowing the districts to strengthen their crisis planning.

Pocatello/Chubbuck school district recognizes highest honors students

FROM SCHOOL DISTRICT 25

For the Journal

The Pocatello/Chubbuck School District honored highest honors high school students and their parents at a celebration last week.

“Welcome to an evening of celebrating the accomplishments of these 68 highest honors seniors who made right choices,” said Superintendent Mary Vagner.

After inviting students to stand Vagner told them, “We owe you a round of applause for doing whatever it takes to be here tonight, the best of the best.”

Vagner also congratulated parents and credited them for their role in their children’s success. The event was held on Monday, May 19, at the Holiday Inn.

To achieve highest honors, students must maintain a 4.0 or higher grade point average throughout their four years of high school. They must also participate in the National Honor Society academic honors plan, which specifies high academic achievement by subject and includes participation in community service.

The annual event included remarks from the district’s Teacher of the Year, Tedra Balls. The Century High School English and journalism teacher encouraged students to continue their achievements and goal planning as they begin to experience life after high school. She joked with students, “I am envious of you, you can graduate from high school — I never do.”

Mrs. Balls outlined the history of their existence in technology, school safety, political happenings, world peace, the economy and the weather. In her final remarks, she left students with this advice, “Strive not to yield for any reason: relationships will get in the way, not enough money, illness — yours or someone you love, not enough money, family problems, not enough money, never yield!”

Highest honors recipients were introduced by their high school principals and congratulated by School Board Trustees, Superintendent Vagner and Secondary Education Director Bob Devine.

Century High School’s seventeen highest honors students were introduced by the school’s principal, Dr. Jim McCoy. They were Cassandra Benson, Thomas Delehanty, Kelcie Dickerson, Tara Fouts, Rilee Glenn, Aaron Jenkins, Emily Jones, Chester Kener, Abigail Kent, Bethany McInturff, Kassidie Nelson, Emily Newhouse, Kelsey Reiland, John Rincon, Jesse Spinner, Brittney Terry, and Tammy Voigt.

Mr. David Ross, Highland High School's principal presented Highland's eighteen highest honors students. They were Alycia Byington, Casey Cathey, Orrin Cellan, Christina Cooley, Sierra Erramouspe, Courtney Gwinn, Travis Hitchcock, Colton Jensen, Troy Johnson, Ashley Jordan, Nathan Miller, Hannah Ross, Emily Scarborough, Shannon Smith, Jacob Stalnaker, Kathryn Swore, Samantha Thayne, and Kameryn Williams.

Thirty-three highest honors students from Pocatello High School were announced by Principal, Don Cotant. They were Aaron Alder, Jordan Allen, Timothy Auger, Bryndon Belnap, Monique Betty, Tyson Bradley, Matthew Brown, Asa Bush, Heather Butler, Katelin Clark, Brittani Coats, James Collet, Skyler Craig, Robert Garbett, Alexa Gray, Holly Hancock, Logan Henderson, Kimberly Hofman, Kevin Housley, Joseph Kennedy, John Lassere, Briann Lawless, Kyler Leen, Alisa Montgomery, Tyler Naftz, Joseph Rude, Ryan Sanders, Daniel Sterner, Erin Tetreault, Kirk Thiemann, Bryan Toston, Ashley Vaughn, and Shawntelle Walker.

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

School year ended on sour note (commentary)

The way Bonneville Joint School District 93's superintendent and school board handed out \$50,000 to 41 teachers is no way to launch performance-based pay, write Peggy Christensen and Kristina Kunz.

On May 21, Bonneville School District 93 Superintendent Chuck Shackett and the school board awarded \$50,500 of your tax dollars to 41 teachers. The Bonneville Education Association is proud of our colleagues and congratulates them on being outstanding educators. However, the president and co-vice presidents of the BEA have spent the last two chaotic weeks of school amassing more than 100 e-mails and additional phone calls from teachers asking some hard questions about the process that was used to select honored teachers. Many have asked, "What was the district thinking?"

When interviewed by local media, Shackett admitted, "The awards are the district's attempt to start performance-based pay, an idea that was kicked around but ultimately failed to pass the Idaho Legislature."

The BEA recognizes that performance-based pay is the trend the state of Idaho is pursuing. We believe that since teachers will be the people most impacted by the performance based pay, they should be part of the team that develops this change in compensation. Ideally, performance-based pay plans need to be negotiated or decided at the local level with local control. Deliberate and careful procedures need to be established for such a plan to be palatable to educators.

In his opening speech at the awards assembly, Shackett said, "These 41 teachers were chosen by principals, parents, teachers and students." If teachers, parents and students were part of the selection process, it was random and very selective. It was not a general survey handled at school. Teachers and parents wonder if the district has been keeping track of teacher performance in some ways that were unknown to any of us. Was it student test scores? Was it

instructional techniques? Was it how teachers manage their classrooms? Or was it something not directly connected to teaching abilities at all? Who knows?

If Bonneville School District is to be the first in the state to be recognized for merit pay, let it be known that it was not handled in any manner the BEA endorses. Instead of finishing up the school year with a positive, cohesive feeling among our teachers, many have experienced anger, frustration, bitterness and humiliation from our superintendent and School Board. By failing to establish a structured method of selection under established guidelines, and acting with haste, the superintendent and school board missed the chance to create a rewards system with integrity. This isn't the precedence we want to set for the rest of Idaho to emulate as our state explores performance-based pay in education.

Christensen is president and Kunz is secretary of the Bonneville Education Association. Other members of the BEA executive committee collaborated in preparing this column. You can write to them at 355 Seventh St., Idaho Falls, ID 83401.

Madison bond set for vote

By KIM NOTEBOOM knoteboom@postregister.com

Madison County voters already approved one bond to build a new high school. Now the district is asking for another to finish the job.

Madison School District officials thought the \$40.5 million bond voters approved two years ago would be enough to build a new high school and refurbish several other schools.

But rising construction costs left the district short. In December, 61 percent of school district voters cast ballots for a \$16 million bond, falling short of the two-thirds majority required to pass school bonds in Idaho.

The district will try again today, asking for a \$19.5 million bond to finish the new high school.

District spokeswoman Janet Goodliffe said feedback on the bond has been positive. Some county residents, however, aren't thrilled about being asked to pony up again.

Greg and Jennifer Edwards displayed their feelings with a yard sign that reads "No, to raising your taxes."

Jennifer Edwards said she is upset the school board told the community that the project could be done for \$40 million. And she doesn't understand how prices could have risen so much that it would need \$19.5 million more.

"I'm really trying to look at this from both sides," she said.

Waiting to pass a bond and finish the job, argues Madison Voters Yes Chairwoman Maria Nate, only would add to the cost.

"For me, my tax increase is \$25 a year and I think that's pretty good for a high school," Nate said.

In February, the school board hired Hogan & Associates of Centerville, Utah, to provide cost estimates. The company spent three months reviewing details, analyzing cost savings and coming up with cost projections for the high school.

Those projections were presented to the school board, which reviewed them and set the bond at \$19.5 million.

"We feel really confident about the prices," Goodliffe said. "We have solid figures we can go with."

Pursuit of the new school dates to 2003, when the school board first developed a school facility plan to address the aging buildings.

In 2006, patrons approved a \$40.5 million request for a high school, a new elementary school and renovations to the Lyman and Archer school buildings.

Rising construction costs, however, left district officials with insufficient funds -- about \$24.5 million -- to build the high school.

According to the bond Web site, construction costs are rising at 5 percent a month and steel has risen 20 percent a month since March 1.

The new high school is expected to cost \$48.1 million, but that's not the only project proposed. Administrators say they need \$2.8 million to renovate the old high school, and costs associated with the new high school have been pegged at \$2 million.

That pushes the district's financial needs to \$52.9 million, but it has \$28.4 million from the 2006 bond, including interest and premium, and it expects to make \$5 million selling property.

That leaves the district approximately \$19.5 million short.

Where to vote

Polls are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. today at Madison High School, Madison Middle School, Kennedy Elementary School and Archer Elementary School.

Revenues

Bond passed in August 2006

-- \$40.5 million

Interest, premium accrued on bond

-- \$3.9 million

Selling the junior high

-- \$5 million

Total revenues -- \$49.4 million

Expenses

New high school

-- \$48.1 million

Archer-Lyman and Burton schools

-- \$16 million

Turn high school into junior high

-- \$2.8 million

Furnishing new high school

-- \$2 million

Total expenses -- \$68.9 million

Source: madisonbond.org

Madison bond

If Madison School District voters approve the \$19.5 million bond, it will raise the tax payments on a \$250,000 home by \$37.11 a year, according to www.madisonbond.org.